

NEBRASKA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

OFFICIAL INTERPRETATION



Interpretation Number: 87-11

Date: 31 October 2003 (original 15 October 1987)

Pamphlet Number: NFPA 70, 2002
Edition

Section(s): 400.7, 400.8

Comments:

Approved use of electrical
extension cords.

Question: Is any make of electrical extension cord or temporary outlet acceptable for use?

Response: Fire safety inspections have exhibited misuse of electrical extension cords. The National Electrical Code; NFPA 70, Article 400, Subsections 7 and 8; lists permitted and non-permitted uses of "flexible cords and cables." These are summarized in the following:

Permitted: a) connection of portable lamps or appliances, b) connection of stationary equipment to facilitate their frequent interchange, and c) appliances where fastening means and mechanical connections are specifically designed to permit ready removal for maintenance and repair.

Not Permitted: a) use as a substitute for fixed wiring, b) running cords through holes in walls, ceilings or floors, c) running cords through doorways, windows or other structural openings, d) attaching cords to building surfaces, and e) concealment behind walls, ceilings or floors.

The authority having jurisdiction may request removal of a temporary electrical extension cord if it is believed to be a hazard. In general, be sure the cord is of a size sufficient to handle the required electrical load of the appliance, maintain the cord in its original "new" condition, and do not gang cords together (length shall be sufficient to readily supply the portable lamp or appliance). Any cords not meeting standards mentioned above may not be approved for use. In addition, multi-outlet cubes or "octopus" cubes will not be allowed. Multiplug appliances (strip outlets) having a built-in "circuit breaker" that are listed and approved for permanent use are acceptable.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Title: Dennis C. Hohbein, State of Nebraska Fire Marshal